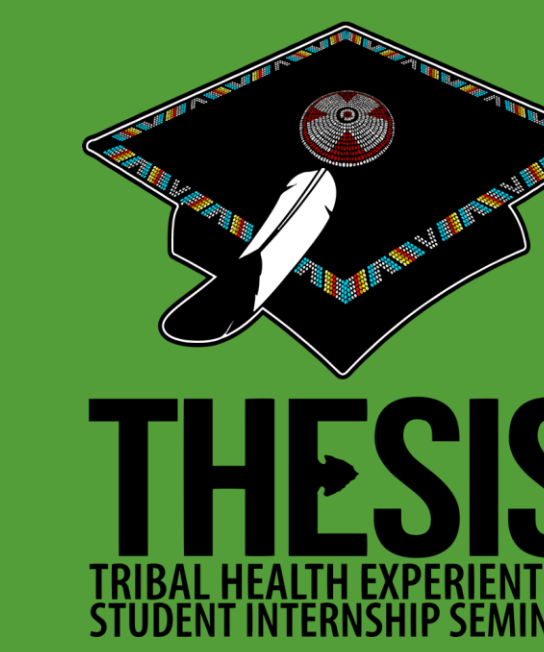


Building Resilience Against Substance Abuse in Cherokee Youth

Caroline Blackford



Pittsburg State University

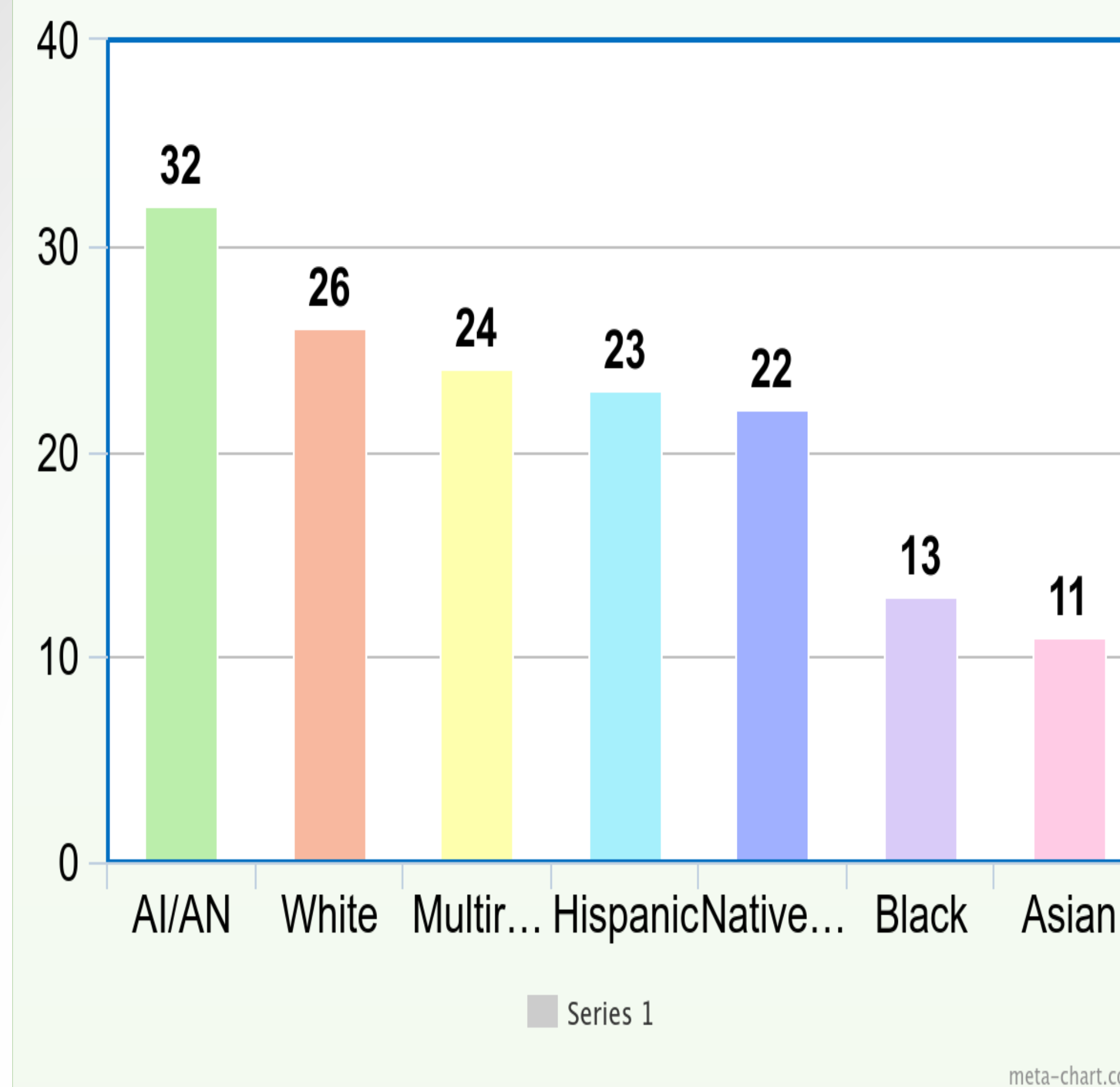
INTRODUCTION

This literature review will evaluate effective prevention strategies against substance use disorders among Cherokee youth and investigate successful intervention strategies for those struggling with substance use disorders. It is hypothesized that prevention efforts beginning during early childhood will be more successful and that substance use interventions incorporating Cherokee culture will be more impactful. American Indian youth is more susceptible to substance use issues than their White American peers. (Nadeau et al., 2024) To support Cherokee youth, these questions must be answered. How can we effectively educate Cherokee youth about substance use? What are effective intervention strategies for Cherokee youth who are struggling with substance use disorders?

OBJECTIVES

- 80% of American Indian adolescents are active drinkers by the time they reach the 12th grade. (Lowe et al., 2016)
- American Indians begin to use substances at an earlier age than their White American counterparts. In fact, they are also more likely to use substances like alcohol and illicit drugs earlier than other racial and ethnic groups. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021)
- Racial discrimination is a predictor of early onset substance use for American Indian youth living in or nearby the Cherokee Nation. (Barry et al., 2024)
- In addition to these factors, growing up in a household with parents who abuse substances will cause children to be more likely to abuse substances during adolescence.
- The influence of other adolescents is also important to consider. AI/AN are more likely to abuse substances due to peer pressure during early adolescence. (Lowe et al., 2016)

ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION AMONG U.S HIGH-SCHOOL STUDENTS 2011- 2021



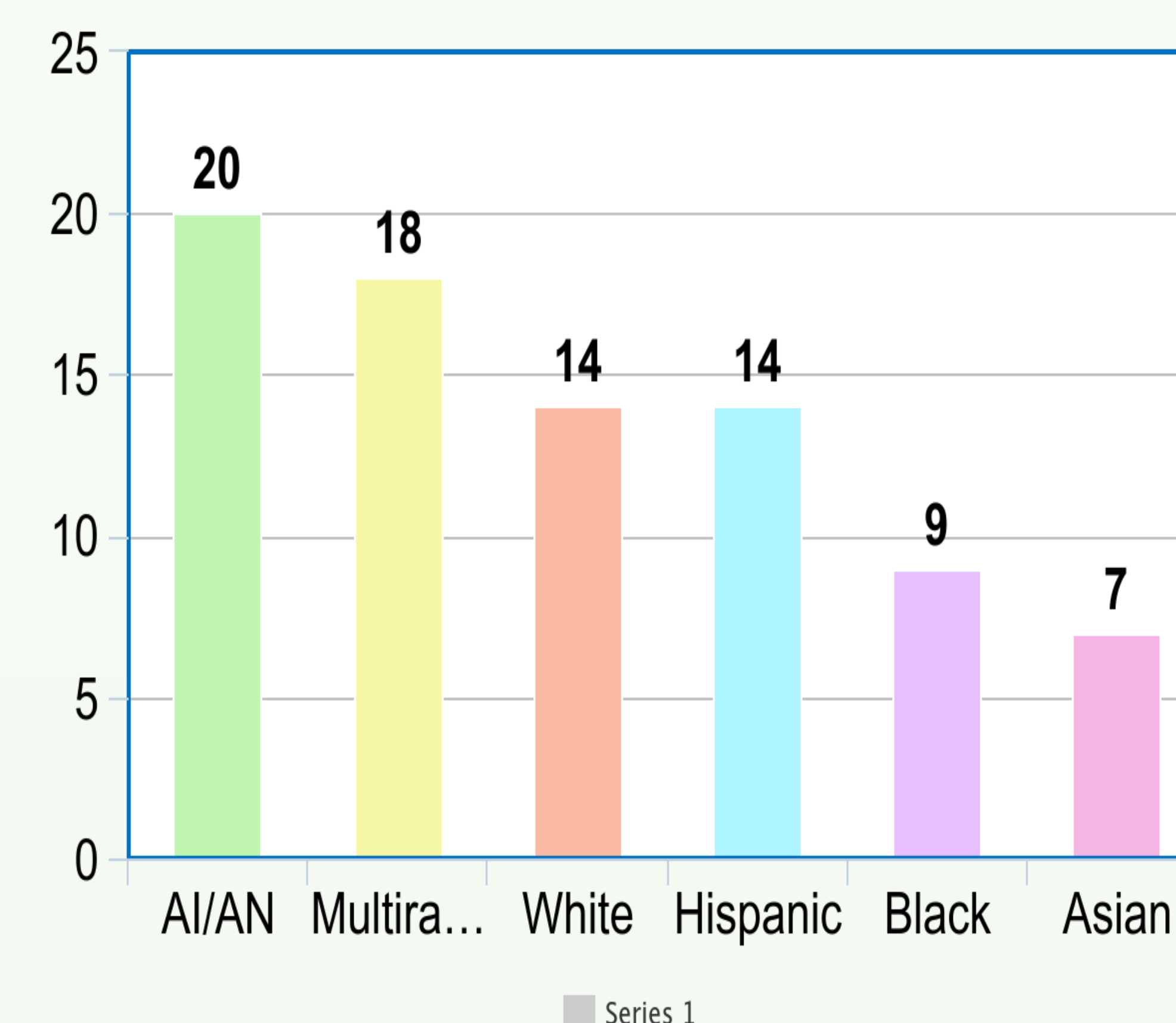
According to the 2011-2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey performed by the CDC, AI/AN high-school students have the highest rates of alcohol consumption and illicit drug use compared to other racial and ethnic groups.

METHODOLOGY

- Google Scholar and Pittsburg State University's Axe Library database were utilized to find information for this literature review.
- *Substance use disorders, Cherokee Nation Youth, and adolescence* were the keywords utilized in these databases to find sources with information relevant to this project.
- Meta-Chart.com was used to graph the data. Data from the 2011-2021 Youth Risk Behavioral Survey performed by the CDC was utilized in these graphs.



ILLICIT DRUG USE PREVELANCE AMONG U.S HIGHSCHOOL STUDENTS 2011-2021



DISCUSSION

- To build resilience, It is crucial for Cherokee youth to have a strong connection to their cultural identity. Prevention efforts and interventions incorporating culture create a sense of belonging and increase well being. It has been found that cultural activities increased optimism, and cultural knowledge. They also lead to reduced substance use rates. (Lewis et al., 2022)
- The Cherokee Nation is supporting Cherokee youth by creating cultural activities. In 1984, the Remember the Removal bike ride tradition began. During this annual tradition, Cherokee citizens bike through the path of the Trail of Tears. This tradition helps youth reconnect with their origins. In addition to helping youth connect on a cultural level, this bike ride promotes physical activity.
- The family of the adolescent must be involved in the adolescent's well-being. Parents must encourage their children and promote education. Parents who promote education and self efficacy among Cherokee adolescence create children who feel stronger and more competent. (Bradley, 2022)

CONCLUSIONS

- For AI/AN youth, substance use prevention is most successful when it includes cultural information and skill building, and recreational activities. (Snijder et al., 2019)
- Intervention for Cherokee adolescents already struggling with substance use disorders should also include cultural activities. Intervention should also be perceived as a "healing journey" rather than a short-term treatment. Services should be offered to Cherokee adolescence for as long as they are needed. (Novins et al., 2012)
- It is also beneficial for family to be included in interventions. This can be beneficial for the healing process. (Novins et al., 2012)
- The school environment is also crucial to prevention. It has been discovered that the school setting is the most impactful environment to provide substance use education. (Lowe et al., 2016)

REFERENCES



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Southern Plains Tribal Health Board and the THESIS staff for this opportunity. I want to thank my mentor, Wesley Wilson for providing guidance during this project. Lastly, I want to thank Career Services at Pittsburg State University for informing me about this opportunity.